

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING

January 13, 2009

First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

MINUTES

Members Present: Jaime Tidlund, Pat Wagner, and Sarah Swartz
Members Absent: Casey Steinberg, Linda Hess, Ruth Hazzard, Bob Saul, John Ingram, and Pauline Lannon
Non-Members Present: David Ziomek (Conservation Director), Diana Stein (Select Board Liaison), and Touria Eaton

Quorum

Made note of only three voting members present, not enough for a quorum.

South Amherst Conservation Association – South East Street

Carol Gray supplied us with a proposal from the South Amherst Conservation Association, which is requesting CPAC funds be available to help purchase 7.4 acres off of South East Street, this is the Nielsen property. There is a Con-con meeting 1/14 where this will be brought in front of them. SACA is looking for Agcom support for this. Members of the Ag-com as well as Dave Ziomek had concerns with the Agcom supporting this, with the thoughts that this is not great soil and is not a great piece of farmland. A suggestion by vice chair Swartz was made that Carol brings this subject back to another meeting when more members are present and action could be taken.

Asian Longhorn Beetle

Dave Ziomek mentioned the devastation the Asian Longhorn Beetle is causing out in the Worcester area on the timberland.

Kendrick Park

There was a brief talk on the Kendrick Park plan, with no major changes since the last meeting.

Farm Festival

Sarah Swartz shared an email from the organizers of the North Amherst Farm Festival, asking if they could meld their festival with the Sept. 27th 250th parade. It is the thought of the commission that if possible the North Amherst Festival tries to switch their date because they are still in the early planing stages. Melding the two is a nice idea but a little tricky it was talked about and most people felt that trying to join the two would only lower attendance at both events.

The commission feels it would be a good idea to have several Farm festival only meetings to try to coordinate the festival, in addition to our regular Ag Com meetings.

Hitchcock Center

A brief discussion on the farm forum has Dave Ziomek looking to the Hitchcock Center for available dates to hold the forum with 3/3 and 3/24 being the two possible first choices. Pat mentioned that 3/24 might be a better date because it is more like spring weather and 3/3 is still winter with more of a chance of messy weather.

The joint Ag-com / Con-con meeting for 1/22/09 has been postponed.

Meetings & Attendance

Some general discussion on low attendance and no quorums was had, with the feeling that we need to do something to bring attendance up, finding a new fixed day or time may help. There are a couple of interested people who may like to sit on the commission, one being Touria Eaton who was in attendance tonight, have no place to go because all of the spaces are full.

There was a mention on changing the date of the 2/10 meeting to another date to see if more people could attend.

Next meeting agenda:

- Approve December 9th and January 13th minutes
- Farm Forum
- Local products in school lunch